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‘Frustrating and demoralizing’:

Trans students struggle to have preferred names recognized on Middlebury’s online systems

By SOPHIA MCDERMOTT-HUGHES & OLIVIA MUELLER
Senior News Writer & Contributing Writer

Choosing and beginning to use a new name is an important milestone in the transitioning process for many transgender individuals. For trans students at Middlebury, that process is complicated by the bureaucratic ordeal of navigating the college’s many online platforms.

In an ideal system, the preferred name and pronouns a student registers in BannerWeb would carry over to the college’s other online platforms. In reality, this information flows inconsistently and sometimes does not flow at all, making it incredibly difficult for trans students to fully transition at Middlebury, according to Director of Education for Equity and Inclusion Renee Wells.

Legal names — typically the name a person is given at birth — are those that appear on government-issued documents. Changing them can prove an expensive and arduous process, depending on the state. Many trans students have yet to change their legal name because of these difficulties and because doing so could require them to come out in ways they may not feel ready or safe to do. Preferred names refer to names some trans people choose as a way to better encapsulate their identity in the meantime.

Some platforms, like the students’ email accounts, automatically update once students change their names in BannerWeb. Others, like Canvas, require students to change their names on-site. Still others neither update from BannerWeb nor allow students to update them individually.

StarRez, which manages rooming assignments, falls into this category. Students often use the platform to see who their roommate will be, which can inadvertently out trans students, especially first years.

A.S. ’23 came out and began transitioning in high school, looking forward to a more “normal” college experience where he could live on a gendered floor and interact with people like his cisgender peers without having to be completely open or come out to everyone. Like many of his fellow first years, A.S. waited in nervous anticipation to find out his future roommate. When he checked StarRez and saw that he was listed with his legal name, that excitement turned to sickening dread as he realized that this stranger — whose attitudes were unknown and with whom he would be living in close quarters — already knew he was trans.

“I shouldn’t need to come out to anybody without making that decision for myself,” A.S. said. “But especially to people I live with and work with and who I just don’t

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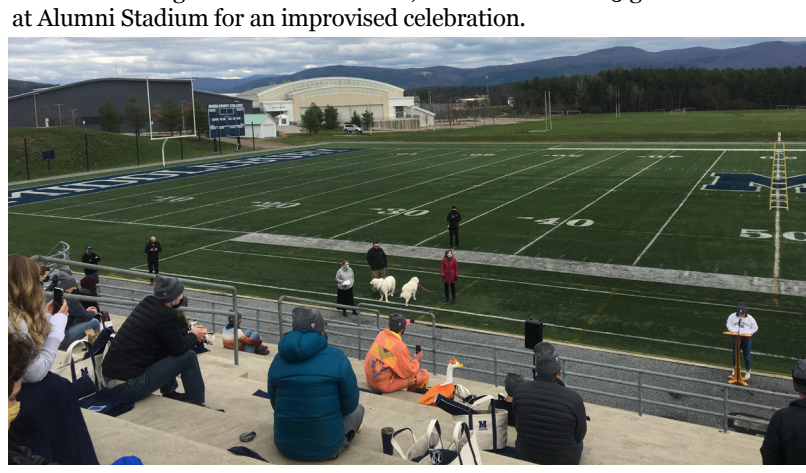
COURTESY PHOTO

Instead of skiing down the Snow Bowl, the Class of 2020.5 gathered instead at Alumni Stadium for an improvised celebration.



JAMES FINN/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Class-selected speaker Annie Blalock ’20.5 delivers her remarks as Feb classmates sit socially-distanced.

After last-minute cancellation, Febs swap Snow Bowl graduation for stadium celebration

By CATHERINE MCLAUGHLIN
Contributing Writer

At their senior celebration, on-campus members of the class of 2020.5 donned beanies and parkas instead of caps and gowns. Sitting socially distanced on the sloped stands of Alumni Stadium, the Super Seniors’ celebration bore little resemblance to the traditional ski (or sled) down the Snow Bowl. But, like many Covid-19-adapted events, their moment together was a cherished stand-in.

After the Oct. 8 announcement that J-Term would be conducted remotely this year, a committee of students and administrators planned a November substitute ceremony for the Class of 2020.5 that was to take place on the last Saturday on campus.

But on Friday, Nov. 13, with caps and gowns still in the mail and another week of classes on campus remaining, Gov. Phil Scott announced that social gatherings would be restricted to members of the same household. A few hours later, the college announced similar restrictions on campus.

But the Class of 2020.5 was determined to come together one last time. The restrictions would not take effect until 10 p.m. on Saturday, more than

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BENJY RENTON/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Middlebury Snow Bowl opened this week no limitations on the number of skiers with but substantial changes to base camp operations.

LOCAL

Despite restrictions, Snow Bowl stays positive heading into winter

By FLORENCE WU
Staff Writer

Because skiers almost always wear face masks to keep safe and warm, skiing seems like the natural social distancing sport. The Middlebury Snow Bowl is scheduled to open on Dec. 2 and will be open weekly Wednesday through Sunday; Rikert Nordic Center will be open seven days a week.

While the skiing will very much be the same, Snow Bowl Director Mike Hussey says the ski area’s base camp operations have undergone substantial changes. To protect the safety of its staff and visitors, the Bowl will restrict indoor access, adopt takeaway food services and impose social distancing requirements for lifts.

A reservation will be required for entry to all Bowl facilities for the sake of contact tracing, and the ski lodge will only be open for restroom access, grab-and-go food and rental services. Customers are required to wear masks, sanitize their hands and follow all indoor social-distancing protocols. Eating, resting and gathering must be done either in skiers’ vehicles or outside.

The Bowl will not be limiting the number of skiers and riders on the mountain for now, according to Hussey. However, if a limit has to be imposed, season pass holders will be prioritized over day pass holders.

“We want the season pass holders to get as much value out of their passes as possible,” Hussey said.

To minimize personal contact, lift passes, rentals and snow school lessons must also be pre-booked online.

Because all Middlebury student operations will be remote for the winter term, there will be no J-Term ski classes or school group programs this season. The Bowl typically hires a substantial number of student ski patrols and instructors from Middlebury, so Hussey said that staffing will be tight over J-Term due to the student absence. He looks forward to welcoming the students back in March.

Due to the absence of students on campus, the Bowl will also be offering additional positions to the college’s dining service staff. The positions span across various areas including front desk work, snowmaking or wherever their skills can be best employed according to Hussey.

“[The positions] were offered to them as something to do over J-Term, and about a dozen of them accepted,” Hussey said. “It’s cool because those folks want to be up here. They are not mandated to come up.”

Overall, Hussey has a positive outlook on the upcoming season despite the pandemic and a possible state-wide lockdown.

“As a small local mountain,

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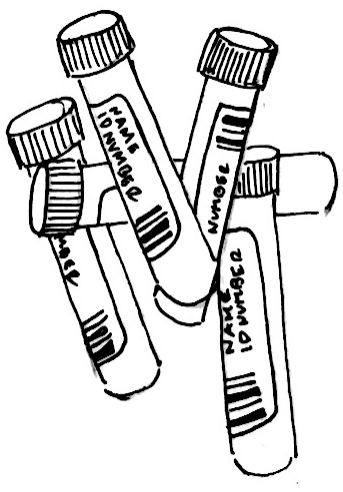
OPINION

We should test like we don’t have luck on our side

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD



SARAH FAGAN/THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Nothing about this year has been lucky, and yet, as we recall the Covid-19 scare in the final days of the term, it seems that we got through the fall by a stroke of luck. As evidenced by the three positive Covid-19 cases on the heels of the semester, our ability to circumvent an outbreak this semester relied heavily on a low prevalence of Covid-19 in Addison County. Now, as cases are on the rise — both nationally and in-state — the upcoming spring semester necessitates a more rigorous testing program to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of the community. We ask that the college implement weekly testing for all students, faculty and staff, no-questions-asked testing upon request and mandatory exit testing in this coming spring semester.

Unlike our NESCAC peers — almost all of whom tested their entire student body twice per week — Middlebury’s targeted-dynamic testing reached less than a third of on-campus students each week. Some went over a month without being tested, and after new cases were detected during the last days of on-cam-

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LOCAL

Select Vermonters may receive Covid-19 vaccine by year’s end

By JACK SUMMERSBY
Staff Writer

High-risk Vermonters could receive a Covid-19 vaccination as soon as early December, State Commissioner of Health Mark Levine announced last week. Multiple pharmaceutical companies have applied for emergency approval from the FDA, accelerating the usual regulatory process.

Drug company Pfizer’s vaccine is scheduled to be reviewed by the FDA on Dec. 10, after which a potential rollout could be nearly instantaneous. Levine has said that Vermont could receive about 20,000 doses of an approved vaccine in the first wave.

The federal government plans to allocate the vaccine on a prorated basis, based on population size. Vermont, with just over 620,000 inhabitants, is the second-least-populated state.

Chris Finley, director of Vermont’s immunization program in the Department of Health, stressed the safety and integrity of the trial process despite the shorter timeline. Pfizer’s vaccine, reportedly 95% effective, was tested among 44,000 people.

“Although vaccine development has been fast, the steps to ensure safety have not been skipped,” Finley told The Campus. “I strongly encourage everyone to get the vaccine when available.”

High levels of vaccination would be necessary to reach herd or community immunity, which officials say is necessary to combat the virus.

Only a small number of Vermonters are expected to be vaccinated before the end of the year. “Due to limited amounts, initially the vaccine will only be made available to those at highest risk,” said Finley.

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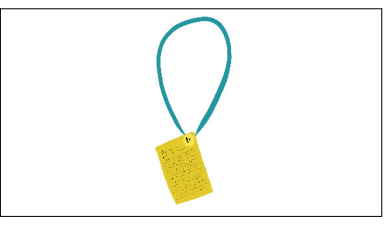
> “State health officials are uncertain when most college students will be able to be vaccinated, although Finley estimates it won’t be until “the middle to the end” of Spring 2021.”

NEWS

Carolyn Finney and Woman Stands Shining explore race and displacement
By JULIA CLARICK



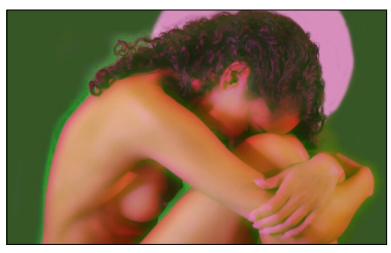
Hannah Laga Abram ’23 wins this year’s Ward Prize
By MAGGIE REYNOLDS

LOCAL

Covid-19 can’t squash Addison County farms
By SOPHIE HILAND

Addison County’s search for solutions to population decline
By MARCO FENGLER

ARTS & CULTURE



Ruby Bowman ’21.5 exhibits photo series “Behind Her Bedroom Door”
By MARIA KAOURIS

Direct Your Attention: Twitch’s resilient surge
By OWEN MASON-HILL

OPINION

Covid-19 has changed what it means to be a Feb
By JULIA SINTON

Making space for slowness
By EMILY THOMPSON

SPORTS

Freshman of the Week: Bella Di Benedetto ’24
By JENNY LANGERMAN